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Message Text

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17
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /069 W
---------- 081237
R 191214Z MAY 76
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6072
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7452

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN, BG
SUBJ: MARCH ON FARAKKA

REF: DACCA 2566

1. THE "STATESMAN" MAY 19 REPORTS THAT THE PEACEFUL CONCLUSION OF MAULANA BHASHANI'S MARCH ON FARAKKA IS VIEWED WITH SATISFACTION BY GOI CIRCLES. AN OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN MAY 18 COMMENTED: "WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT ANY PROBLEM BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH CAN BEST BE SOLVED IN A FRIENDLY DISCUSSION IN A SPIRIT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING."

2. THE DELHI PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT THE DIRECTORS GENERAL OF THE INDIAN BORDER SECURITY FORCE AND THE BANGLADESH RIFLES MET FOR 40 MINUTES MAY 18 AT BONGAON, 55 MILES NE OF CALCUTTA IN INDIAN TERRITORY. THE MEETING ORIGINALLY
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REQUESTED BY THE BANGLADESH SIDE REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED

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THE PREVENTION OF UNAUTHORIZED BORDER CROSSINGS.
THE CHIEF OF THE INDIAN BORDER SECURITY FORCE TOLD THE PRESS
THAT ADDITIONAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE ENTIRE AREA
WOULD BE CONTINUED SO AS NOT TOTAKE CHANCES WITH FORCES
INTENT ON CAUSING TROUBLE.

3. IN A MAY 19 EDITORIAL THE "NATIONAL HERALD," SPOKESMAN
FOR THE CONGRESS PARTY, CRITICIZED THE BDG FOR HAVING
ACTED "BELATEDLY AND HALF-HEARTEDLY" IN DEALING WITH THE

MARCH. TO HAVE ALLOWED THE ACTIVITY WHILE NEGOTIATIONS
WERE GOING ON AND WHEN INDIA HAD MADE A GOODWILL GESTURE
WAS, THE EDITORIAL ARGUED, "NO ACT OF STATESMANSHIP." AN
"INDIAN EXPRESS" EDITORIAL MAY 19 EXPRESSES APPROVAL FOR THE
"FIRM STAND" TAKEN BY THE BDG IN PREVENTING THE MARCHERS
FROM CROSSING THE BORDER.

4. CALCUTTA'S AMRITA BAZAR REPORTS (MAY 19) FOR MALDA THAT
MAULANA BHASHANI WAS FORCED TOCALL OFF MARCH BECAUSE
OF "POOR PUBLIC RESPONSE" TO HIS MOVEMENT. FEW PEOPLE
SAID TO HAVE JOINED MARCH, WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE "A FLOP"
AND A "SHOCKING EXPERIENCE" TO THE MAULANA. HE REPORTEDLY
BLAMED INERTIA OF PEOPLE FOR FAILURE AND ANNOUNCED A "SECOND
STATE" OF THE MOVEMENT, THREATENING TO FAST TO DEATH
UNLESS DISPUTE SETTLED BYAUGUST 16.

5. ACCORDING TO A BELGIAN EMBOFF, BRUSSELS HAS INSTRUCTED
ITS EMBASSY IN DELHI TO MAKE A DEMARCHE ON FARAKKA. BOTH THE GOI
AND THE BDG WILL BE COUNSELED TO CALM THE SITUATION. ASKED HOW
BELGIUM JUSTIFIED ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THIS MATTER, THE EMBOFF
REPLIEDTHAT THE GOI WAS KEENLY AWARE OF BELGIUM'S ROLE IN THE
CONSORTIUM AND THE EEC AND ALSO HAD A HIGH REGARD FOR PRIME
MINISTER TINDEMANS.
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